

fertile soil, with a view to reap more abundant harvests, and be better repaid for their toil, might be prevailed upon to continue their residence among us, with the full assurance of competent support. In order to show the amount of profit which may be expected to inure to the State at large, from the cultivation of silk, your committee beg leave to refer to a report made to Congress at the last annual session, from which it appears, that "the importations of silks during the year ending 30th September, 1836, amounted to \$17,477,900; and, as that committee observes, "most of this enormous amount is consumed in this country, and is an annual tax upon consumers, and a total loss upon them and the country. For, it is believed, there are laborers enough in the country, who are unproductively or unprofitably employed, to produce and manufacture the whole amount. If this be so, it follows as a necessary consequence, that we sustain an annual loss of double that amount in our unemployed and misapplied labor."

Assuming these positions to be correct, your committee foresee, that when our farmers come to adopt this culture as a branch of husbandry, thousands will be added to the annual value of our products, to the no small advancement of the best interests of society.

When your committee reflect upon the importance of agriculture to the welfare of the State, its past failures, and present depressed condition in Maryland, together with the prospect of a falling off in population, from the operation of these causes, they regret the indifference with which the Legislature has treated its claims; that while millions have been bestowed upon other objects, agriculture alone, without which, in a country like ours, no other enterprize can succeed, should have been passed by unheeded, and be left to struggle against every obstacle, unaided and unassisted. In view, therefore, of all these considerations, they are impressed with the necessity of a change of policy in regard to this most important object. Your committee think it is due to the claims of agriculture, to appropriate some portion of the State's funds towards its improvement, and they know of nothing so well calculated to effect this purpose, as the silk culture. Some of our enterprising citizens have already engaged in the business, and have succeeded in raising and manufacturing fine specimens of sewing silk; but the cultivation is very limited, and may be said to exist only in a state of infancy. Under these circumstances of the culture, partial failures may be expected to attend the first attempts of our farmers, from want of information; losses will doubtless be incurred from inexperience; and it only requires the munificent aid of the State to ensure the benefits of a successful pursuit of this branch of industry, by supplying bounties upon production, sufficient to cover such losses, and excite a spirit of enquiry among our agriculturists.